

Project Management Overview

Section 1 - Chapters 1 - 3

There is some great material in the first four chapters of the PMBOK® Guide. The bullets and italics are very important throughout the guide. A few quick comments follow:

Page 4. "What is a Project?" is very important. We often see confusion on this issue and we have to reverse negotiate with resources for our projects. If you ask Mary how much time she is available on our project, she will tell you 60%. If Mary is doing non-project work 40% of the time and is working on three equal projects, she is only available on our project 20% of the time. If she is working on three activities on our project simultaneously, she can only work approximately 7% of her time on each.

The bullets and italics in the PMBOK® Guide are always very important. You must make the distinction between designing a new car which is a project and producing them each day after that, which is operations.

Page 5. Projects are temporary and unique and therefore often risky. Note the italics.

Page 6. Definitions are important.

Page 8. In some ways this is the most important page in the PMBOK® Guide. We encourage our students to copy this page and use it as a bookmark when studying. This is PMI eating its own dog food.

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) Level 1 is Project Management. Note the definition of WBS in the Glossary on page 209.

WBS Level 2 is the information in the nine black boxes 4 to 12.

WBS Level 3 is the information in the white boxes, ranging from 3 to 6 items.

WBS Level 4 is Inputs, Tools and Techniques and Outputs for each Chapter.

WBS Level 5 contains the detail specific to each chapter.

Page 11 to 13. The concept of life cycle is very important. The project to build a bridge may take three years. The bridge may be in use for hundreds of years. Everyone will remember lousy quality long after you got to be a hero for bringing the project in on time and on budget.

This is often a great opportunity for negotiation. If you have a boss with unrealistic expectations about having software ready for Comdex, when he came to you months late, you should ask how much more money the company will make if you make the deadline. You should then negotiate for a large chunk of this to allow you to fast track your project. If necessary, you should also negotiate for more and better resources, less scope, etc.

Pages 13 to 15. In our classes, we demonstrate the importance of histograms (Figure 2-1), Cumulative or S curves (Figure 2-3) and Go/No-Go decisions. You generally don't have a realistic

schedule until you use the float to resource level and you should kill silly projects at the first opportunity before you waste these resources.

Page 16 to 17. The figures make a great Level 1 schedule for your project management software. We always try to break out by Phase and Deliverable at Level 1 rather than by Functional Group. We take a team approach to get everyone focused on the deliverables. The functional approach generally builds silos of people who hate people in other silos and is often the kiss of death for a project. See our Project Management Using Microsoft Project, (PMMP) Checklist.

Page 19. It is very important to realize where your company is on the continuum between Functional and Projectized in Figure 2-6. Functional Organizations are generally adequate at performing operations and lousy at performing projects. Projectized organizations are often superb at projects but may struggle to remain good at operations, which are often seen as less exciting. It is often extremely difficult for older companies to make the transition from Functional to Projectized.

TWG is lucky to do only projects. We use CPM schedules for just about everything so to us, Organization charts are an instrument of the devil. Many of you have to wear two hats so various organization charts are discussed on pages 20 to 23. The organization chart is pretty simple for the Projectized organization. The project manager is king or queen and everyone else is equal. The critical path governs, not the person in the corner office with the biggest rubber tree.

Pages 24 to 27. It is encouraging to see more emphasis being placed on these important leadership issues. It is pretty hard to be a great project manager without being adept at leadership, communicating, negotiating, etc.

Project Management, A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling, Seventh Edition by Harold Kerzner, PHD has some great material and perspective on these issues.

Page 31. The diagrams are very important. Please note that in Figure 3-1 the diagram is repeated for each phase. Do not try to use Figure 3-2 as Level 1 in your schedule. You will then end up with summary bars that run the length of the phase and are not very useful. See our PMMP Checklist.

Page 32 to 37. Note the difference between Core and Facilitating Processes and the historical perspective. Scope, Time, Resource Planning, Cost and Integration are the Core Planning processes while the other processes facilitate these.

Page 38 is particularly important. Note the heavy emphasis on planning although it may run against every fiber of your being. Fortunately, if you wear two hats and you do this thoroughly up front, the amount of project management work may drop off rapidly when you start